

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group

Minutes -- DRAFT

Wednesday, May 17, 2017 -- 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Location: 12200 Airport Rd, Sutter Creek, CA 95685

Meeting Facilitator: Julia Stephens ♦♦♦ **Minutes:** Jill Micheau

Attendees: Laurence Crabtree; Casey Jardine; Robin Wall; Gerald Schwartz; Julia Stephens; Katherine Evatt; Robert Smith; Pat Noll; Sue Holper; Steve Wilensky; Jim Junethe; Ray Cablayan; Richard Honey; Michael Pickard; Kent Lambert; Reuben Childress; Rick Hopson; Erick Kleinfelter; Pat McGreevy; Steve Ogburn; Trisha Frazier; Bill Haigh; Alaina Osimowitz; Jill Micheau – total 24

Item Number	Agenda Item
1	Call to order (Julia Stephens)
2	Participants introductions (All)
3	Modification and/or approval of agenda (All) – Items 5, 6, and 7 were swapped around
4	Approval of April minutes (All) -- Approved
Presentations	
5	<p>Forest Plan Revision (Laurence Crabtree, USFS) <i>A PowerPoint presentation was shown. An extended version of the presentation and all additional information about the Forest Plan Revision can be found on the web here:</i> https://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/eldorado/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fseprd527592&width=full</p> <p><i>Our new administration brings change to the Forest Service. We have a new Secretary of Agriculture and will have a new Undersecretary at some point, and possibly a new Chief. The Eldorado and Stanislaus National Forests are preparing to enter the Forest Plan Revision planning process. On the Eldorado, the current Land and Resource Management Plan is over 25 years old and needs to be updated. Forest Service is using the 2012 planning rule (in presentation and on web site). Pre-assessment work is ongoing. Will have a public meeting about the Forest Plan Revision processes and likely several meetings during the revision process. Draft maps from So. Forests are available as example. Waiting for Washington Office to give go-ahead to initiate the Forest Plan Revision process. We have a draft "Public Participation Strategy" that will be shared. No current fire management authorizations for letting fires burn... current plan says to put it out. Need more flexibility, maybe for higher elevations – to move to more resilient forests. Will be doing pre-assessment work; including Wild and Scenic rivers, Wilderness areas, designated areas, species of conservation concern, timber suitability, and other areas. New wilderness areas can only be created by congress, but planning process can recommend. Some designations can be made through the forest plan, but not big things like wilderness or wild and scenic river (federal) status.</i></p> <p><i>Q: what key things are you looking for: suitability, slope, assessment has 15 areas that were of interest to the public. This is more in the assessment stage; recreational opportunities, wildlife risk assessment, etc. Whole different stage of analysis.</i></p> <p><i>A: Want to do in a streamlined manner, not spend years doing it, limited amount of money.</i></p> <p><i>Will be scheduling meetings with both forest regions; forest boundaries need coordination across boundaries; may share resource specialists, may have one team to handle both forests for efficiency.</i></p> <p><i>Q: Any stats on how fire and tree mortality has impacted board feet in forests numbers?</i></p>

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	<p>A: Do not have numbers for Eldorado; Rim fire lost 2M board feet. Q: Any insight about changes from new Administration? Nature of changes? A: No undersecretary for FS yet; awkward for us now. Once filled, we will become more stable. Maybe by end of week. Will improve certainty. Can't hire right now. Only fire positions can be filled right now. Q Wilensky: any insight into CLFR funds? A: big deal for us. A: No insight.</p>
6	<p>Power Fire DEIS (Reuben Childress) Want to find way to send comments to the Forest Service in a reasonable time frame. This is the last meeting before comment period is over. Time frame is a challenge. ACCG was not broadly represented at the last planning meeting. Has anyone reviewed the document? Evatts asked that Reuben give an overview: The Power Fire Project seeks to reforest the area above Salt Springs Reservoir. 14,000 acres (of federal lands) burned in 2004; reforestation efforts started, then stopped due to a lawsuit; lots of brush has grown back, which has inhibited the growth of naturally regenerating trees. Want to work on landscape to reforest it. There is some disagreement on methods. Alternative 3 was designed by ACCG; differed from final plan; proposed action was slightly different. We now have a draft EIS; Evatts: what was the alternative changed by the Forest Service? Hopson: about 4K acres were proposed for treatment; complex project; has been managed w/o chemicals; FS felt it wasn't working; an employee last year had to be flown out – risky, hard work. Felt that herbicide in some regions would make the work safer and more effective. Spent a year to develop an alternative to reduce volume of herbicide. Did many field trips; developed a reduced or no-herbicide alternative with several variations; Childress: ACCG letter didn't have full support; there was disagreement on the level of herbicide; there was consensus on getting the land to a fire resilient state. Heisenbittel: ACCG did spend a great deal of time out in the field; site preparation was the biggest issue; 1K acres, relatively small footprint. Most involved use of herbicides. Asked for mastication and other options. No issue with doing low-herbicide alternative, but that may not be the most efficient alternative. About 60/40% mechanical/chemical; seems much different than what JH recalls from scoping project; Hopson: Lots of land is not being treated; some questions can go into this comment letter. Be specific on where we missed the boat. Evatts: Deadline too soon. Can't produce comment letter in time; Hopson: Deadline is June 5th, but FS will accept the comment letter at any time, but it is preferable to receive comments by the deadline. FS does not have the authority to move the deadline. We end up with a bunch of individual letters, not effective. Need ACCG letter. If you submit a scoping letter at the beginning, you can comment at any time. Pickard: what about a telecom or webinar to discuss this? Childress: How can we manage the comment period? Process is key. Wilensky: Full committee has wide diversity and representation. Those that have been working on this all year know most; can this group task those people, delegate them to come up with a response? Agree on date and get it done. Or we could just let everyone take shots and litigate – but then nothing happens. Childress: We have done this in the past. A planning group was given authority to produce comments at a separate meeting. Challenge is time; Q: Who has been engaged? A: John Hoffman; John Heisenbittel; Reuben Childress; Gwen Starret; CCSERC; Heisenbittel: maybe start letter with what we agree on; Hopson: We don't need to pick an alternative, just raise issues at this point; will draft decision;</p>

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	<p>Public meeting tomorrow at 3:00. Amador Ranger Dist. Evatts: We could send the letter out to entire group by email. Stephens: We need a way to get through the process; Action Item: It was decided that a sub-group would produce a draft comment letter and email it to the full ACCG by 5/29; responses to that draft would be due not later than 6/2; the sub-group is comprised of Reuben, Steve W, John H, and Jill M. Meeting scheduled for the next day (5/18) in Mountain Ranch; additional teleconferences will be used to complete the draft; allow 3 business days for ACCG review and feedback; to FS no later than 6/5.</p>
7	<p>Getting to consensus and conflict resolution (Steve Wilensky) We need to re-formulate an organization with protocols; maybe need to flesh those out more in our strategic plan. There are several individual things that have happened that create tension between MOA folks and their interests vs. ACCG and projects; the tension has always been there; we persist because we've gotten things done despite our differences; trust and faith in each other, tenacity of the group has kept us going. We've lost some of our founders; Teresa Mc C; John Hoffman Need to understand how loss of people impacts the group, how do we fill those gaps? Want to hear inputs so we can use in strategic planning. Promote action AND consensus. Discussion: Evatts: We've had conflicts on very large scale projects; some not valid; in strategic plan, compare and contrast and identify what the issues were; for example, Hemmlock vs. one that didn't work; how people got involved, why successful, why not? Wall: collaborative surveys are really important; Hopson: Identify key issues, assemble teams to identify consensus/other areas. Is Megan working on this? Adhoc field trip feed into ACCG? Heisenbuttel: good idea to compare projects we've been involved with. Key issues that kept us from reaching consensus; Many times these issues are core values for member organizations. Need to understand core values. Are they identified? Frazier: need process and ground rules, know where each party is coming from. Re Strategic planning process: develop a set of principles and guidelines for operation. ACCG let this go when Cornerstone came along. Childress: ACCG formed so the Forest Service could move forward more quickly, do more with what they have. Use this group and CFLR success to try new things. Plan on how to do things differently and new; speakers from field; Scott Stephens on restoration methods, etc.; stay creative. Wilensky: early inspiration was adaptive management.; try a series of things to see how it went (monitoring)... test theories rather than argue ideologies; try on a small scale and see results. Let many core values be exercised on the same plot. Noll: what is ACCG? Forests not in natural state; water quality, quantity and flow; native American cultural sites in disarray; job training and local job force; consensus is a way to bring litigating parties together earlier to comprise so projects can be implemented and celebrated, not litigated; bring funding to long neglected areas. We put ourselves on the map over past 6 years. Funding sources look at us now. Evatt: early on we tried to focus on projects within a zone of agreement, pretty narrow. New projects have more room for conflict; Enter this into the new strategic plan; we need more people like Hoffman to consider whole organization, not just organizational domains and positions; what is value of this group and what can it be? Stay in our sweet spot. Identify issues to be resolved so projects can be moved forward. Jardine: A big lawsuit was dropped because of the collaborative element that was added. FS relies on partners and volunteers to do work. More important now than ever before. Wants us to continue... may be her last meeting????</p>

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8	<p>Tree mortality updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amador (Heisenbittel) – meeting last week; Amador county pilot project completed; local hired to fall and remove bark beetle killed timber; 70 trees; tracked cost and time, ~\$300/tree – less than estimated; easy area, flat, no houses around. Other pilot projects coming up in Silver Lake Pines and Ranch Horn Grove; expect numbers to be higher. Trying to get all tree mortality work done under CAL OES grant money. Waiting for PG&E to do their work, working behind them. Meetings are noticed to members of core group; about 20 people; public notice every few months via Jennifer at Board of Supervisors. • Wilensky: some Calaveras liability issues: what happens when a tree falls on a house? A: Landowner must accept liability; contractor has insurance. • Calaveras (Pickard) – quick meeting; updates; air curtain burner running at Red Hill; SPI will be doing prescribed fire; PG&E is removing trees again. Were shut down due to accidents last month; county info: Calaveras behind Amador county; have not hired a tree mortality coordinator. RFP came out Monday 15th for coordinator, requesting a professional FS person or arborist; Current coordinator Mike Miller is gone; will return in new fiscal year. Hyperspectral imaging: Dean ??? is the person responsible for images; Calaveras has data, can be used by public agencies; forestry and BLM can use. High resolution images being used to count dead trees. Posted on Calaveras website for tree mortality. • Smith: may move yard up to Toyone eventually; meet Friday with County to see where it goes from there. There are two applicants, both qualified. Have cleared 40K cubic yards in the past 2 weeks, about 40% done with roadside hazard, 2k trees added to that; need to get with BLM and Fire Department to keep cycle going;. CDF has paperwork for land owners. Need support from some of our groups to get word to county. Wallace yard. • Pickard: 5/31 reforestation work shop in Sutter Creek. Info has been posted to ACCG website.
9	<p>Admin Work Group update (John Heisenbittel)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Planning Group meetings have been scheduled
10	<p>Planning Work Group update (Robin Wall)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next planning meeting will be in Calaveras Ranger District (Hathaway Pines) on the 31st with a field trip to Irish O'Manuel; will give synopsis of project; last meeting had all Amador specialists there; made list of potential field trips for the season; if you want others, let Robin know; Should we post list of field trips on web? On the calendar? Good place to look at alternative treatment and management. Evatt suggested a field trip; Heisenbittel will give contact to her. UC Blodgett is site. • McGreevy: list of new projects; PG&E is interested in fire breaks; dozen projects listed; where are they? Can FS start to supply more info on projects so we know more about where the projects are? Need shape plots. Is there an FTP site with all project shape files there? • Do all projects need to be in a CWPP? Move to planning WG discussion? Action Item: Robin -- Put on 31st agenda... • Wilensky: how do we use our website? Important issue.
11	<p>Operations Work Group update (John Heisenbittel)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hopson and Heisenbittel will be setting up meetings with local contract groups as in the past; should we do it in evening? Provide pizza? Wait until after logging season? Will discuss with local contractors. Will discuss FS plans over next 5 years; latest on hiring local, etc.
12	<p>Agency/organization updates (All, round table)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please give name and organization before your update • Frazier, Mother Lode Job Training: got grant to hire 100 workers over 18 months; will be placed at public non-profit organizations; part time, 24 hours per week, \$15-20 hour; temp work; Storm jobs;

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restoration, not reconstruction. Let her know if you want to hire. Sent letters to public agencies; to announce. Department of Labor funding she thinks.

- **Stephens**, CCSERC: Julia is moving to the Greater Valley Conservation Corp; helping with Tuolumne County workshop; may be here in new role.
- **Hopson, Amador FS**: Power Amador RD 3:00; Panther draft decision pushed back one week; 26th is new date. Signed 5-year master agreement with CHIPS, a milestone for this group. Great success; and 2 other projects signed today; may be able to extend comment period; will confirm; maybe 3 week extension? Will that work? Ruben and John, will that work?
- **Holper, Community Member**: because of volunteer labor and trees, planted 150-200 trees; people on private land need this support. Thanks to Steve.
- **McGreevy, CalAm**: last Friday submitted 2 CA Firesafe Council grants; on Calaveras side, 85 acres on eastern side of Arnold in Blue Lake Springs HOA, together with SPI and Big Trees State Park – becoming solid; now working on west side, White pines to Hathaway pines. Saturday started another grant for Stephens money. Good news: in Moke Hill, go to China Town Gardens; CalFire has removed all blackberries next to the cemetery; big open space will become an interpretive park. Hydrology and veggies coming.
- **Smith Grinding**: don't give up on Calaveras; need support from ACCG; coming to a head; has much invested in it. Looking for joint ventures with county and PG&E for roadside cleanup.
- **Evatts, Foothill Conservancy**: Bill 8524 money to fires, not back to general fund; PUC fined PG&E \$8.3M for failure to report. County supervisors working to rewrite amendment; proportional to acreage burned; match FEMA and OES grants; fire prevention work including bark beetle trees; slated to utility and energy and assembly. **Action Item: PUT ON NEXT AGENDA – what is our position?** Cal fire asked PG&E for money; Garamendi commended us for working on this. Conservancy news: music at Freight & Salvage in Berkeley. Annual dinner 6/24.
- **Cablavan, Calaveras FS**: Meeting with ??? about the Pumpkin Hollow proposal out to bid at end of month; Lake Alpine: still much snow; may be open by mid June; road damage on Spicer Road, can't be assessed while still under snow. If FS can fix it fast, will open ASAP. Black Spring EA: final scoping out soon.
- **Heisenbittel, Amador FS council**: \$75K PG&E grant for fuels reduction will be used to clear around private roads; focus on Mitchell mine area, Buckhorn Ridge, Pine Acres area; Butte Mountain. Public input or other suggestions; Amador submitted \$200K grant to FS council grant to be used for Hwy 88 Pine Grove N thru CYA camp down Moonlight Ridge towards Sutter Creek; CYA camp will do work.
- **Ogburn, Cedar Mill Farms**: Rig to reopen and want to get through county so we can bring in logs. Need conditional use permit; home owners will establish area near 88 for homeowners to bring in logs; hard to get fuels on ground out of neighborhoods.
- **Pickard, Sierra Nevada Conservancy**: June Board meeting 6/7; Shaver Lake; landowners: workshops really fantastic for local landowners about how to get and plant trees, etc. Will send Jill flyer for web site.
- **Haigh, BLM**: Got 1% national budget increase. Maybe some money for fuels projects; if so will be used for Tiger Gap. Lilygap: all tree marking done; miner's stuff has been moved back to his property; documents getting ready this week; work will be starting fall.
- **Wall, Amador FS**: next week is SCALE meeting; was originally the 3 CFLRAs in California, now at least 10 collaboratives, northern to central CA. dialog with FS;
- **Jardine, ElDorado FS**: next week start will scoping for Bear Valley lift replacement – will discuss at planning meeting on 5/31.
- **Wilensky, CHIPS**: economic developement joint partnership agreement that covers Calaveras, Marin, Alpine, and Tuolumne counties; made us all not able to get EDAP funds; Steve rewrote it and it will be voted on forest infrastructure project priorities.
TRES: we need representatives at 2 June dates: FS< BLM, burning, etc: all by invitation; fire

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	<p><i>departments; fall burns going in a big way; looking for projects. Meet 7th or 8th: will come all day to visit sites; no acreage limits. Update: a Doodle poll was sent to all; meeting is scheduled for June 7th 10-1, at Steve's house.</i></p> <p><i>Former FS person Baylen has joined CHIPs Board; I Jinn also joined for cultural site expertise. Now back doing cultural site using native crews.</i></p>
13	<p>Foster Firs Collaborative Survey (Robin Wall)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Online version; paper versions and timeline available at back of room; allows us to gauge some of collaborative work between projects. Please submit.</i>
14	<p>Adjourn (Julia Stephens)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Next meeting June 21, 2017, CA-26 & Pine St, West Point, CA 95255

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2017 Meeting Schedule:

Date	Location	Facilitator	Speakers/Topics
May 17	Jackson	Julia Stephens	Steve/conflict resolution
June 21	West Point	Rick Hopson	TBD/ecological forest restoration
July 19	Jackson		
August 16	West Point		
September 20	Jackson		
October 18	West Point		
November 15	Jackson		
December 20	West Point		